READER'S GUIDE

2024 Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan

Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan

REGIONAL LEADERS

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
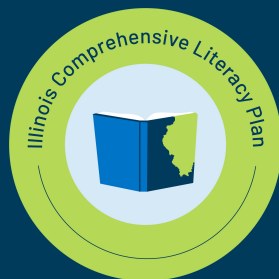
Reader's Guide: Regional Leaders

This guide is designed as a companion to the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan to support regional leaders in aiding schools within their regions in effectively navigating the plan and implementing evidence-based practices. Customized specifically for leadership at the regional level, it presents essential strategies, offers readings relevant to their distinct roles, and incorporates workbook pages for active engagement. This resource endeavors to empower regional leaders to improve literacy instruction and foster equitable learning environments, enabling every student to attain literacy success.

Guide Audience

Regional leadership, including Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers, various program administrators, professional development providers, and teacher support groups, oversees multi-district literacy initiatives. They ensure effective implementation of state policies, supporting literacy development statewide.

Overview of the Plan

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan establishes a guiding framework to enhance literacy instruction statewide. The plan targets all educational levels, emphasizing equity and inclusiveness while adhering to evidence-based practices. Central to the plan is the commitment to address and rectify persistent literacy disparities. It aims to unify efforts across various educational systems to ensure every student develops proficient literacy skills.
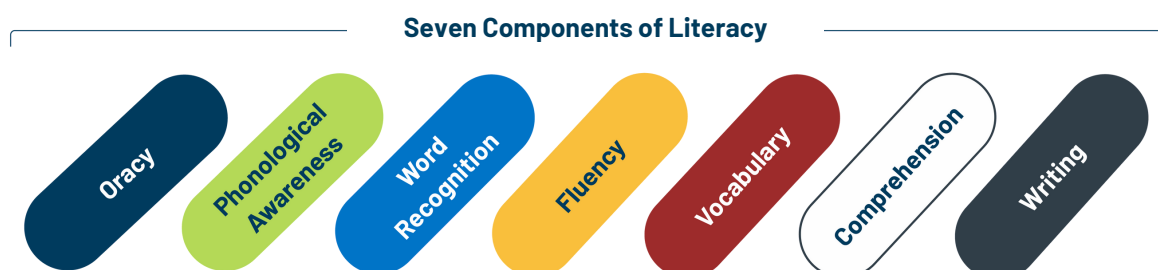
The plan focuses on three main goals:

GOAL 1: Every **student** receives high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

GOAL 2: Every **educator** is prepared and continuously supported to deliver high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

GOAL 3: Every **leader** is equipped to create, maintain, and sustain equitable conditions for high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan encourages local decision-making and adaptability, urging districts to customize their approaches based on specific needs and data within the local context. It's focus is on core, Tier 1 instruction, supplemented by discussions on interventions and differentiation strategies, targeting the literacy needs of Illinois students and working to close educational gaps.

The plan identifies Seven Components of Literacy at the core of every effective literacy program.

Seven Components of Literacy

Oracy · Phonological Awareness · Word Recognition · Fluency · Vocabulary · Comprehension · Writing

The plan contains six sections that guide readers through the careful consideration of creating and implementing a comprehensive literacy program that is systematically aligned.

The **Introduction** articulates the need based on data for a state literacy plan and outlines the vision, purpose, and objectives, serving as the foundational overview of the plan.

Section 1: Framework for Effective Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction establishes the core strategies for delivering impactful literacy instruction based on evidence-based practices, across the **Seven Components of Literacy**.

Section 2: Educator Professional Learning and Development details the continuous development and support of educators to ensure the delivery of high-quality literacy instruction, emphasizing educator preparation programs alignment with the plan.

Section 3: Effective Literacy Leadership focuses on the role of leaders in driving high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction, while advocating for collaboration, culturally responsive instruction, and data-informed decision-making.

Section 4: Support and Implementation Considerations highlights critical strategies for developing and implementing the literacy plan, through a workbook style format.

Section 5: Tools and Resources provides a list of resources and tools to aid districts, teachers, and families in implementing the literacy plan.

Engaging with the Plan

Below are general tips for engaging with the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan as a regional leader:

- **Coordinate Multi-District Initiatives**: Facilitate the alignment of literacy initiatives across districts within your region so districts can benefit from shared resources and professional development.

- **Enhance Professional Development Network**s: Develop and expand regional networks for professional development focused on literacy. Offer workshops, training sessions, and collaborative learning opportunities that address the specific needs of educators across districts.

- **Foster Collaboration and Sharing**: Encourage districts to collaborate and share their experiences, challenges, and successes in implementing the literacy plan.

- **Support Policy Implementation**: Guide districts in interpreting and implementing state literacy policies. Provide clarity, resources, and support to ensure that policies are applied consistently.

- **Promote Equity and Inclusion**: Work with districts to address disparities in literacy achievement and ensure that every student has access to high-quality literacy instruction.

- **Leverage Data for Regional Insights**: Collect and analyze literacy data at a regional level to identify trends, successes, and areas for improvement.

- **Build Community Partnerships**: Strengthen partnerships with community organizations, libraries, universities, and businesses to support literacy development beyond the classroom.

Sample Roadmap through the Plan

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan incorporates various stakeholder roles that exist in education that each uniquely support literacy. Understanding your role offers insights into effective implementation and collaboration for positive student outcomes. The plan is designed to support varied uses and can easily be read by section and in varying order.

One sample roadmap to the Plan specifically for regional leaders is:

Workbook

The Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan includes workbook pages at the end of its sections, offering a hands-on approach to apply the concepts presented in the narrative. These workbooks combine reflection tools and action planning to enhance user engagement.

Designed to cater to varied audiences, the first three sections include practical implementation tips, reflective questions, and suggested next steps tailored to address the specific challenges and viewpoints of each audience group. The series is rounded off with **Section 4: Support and Implementation Considerations**, which provides essential guidance on preparing for literacy initiatives. Section 4 is most impactful when completed as a team with other local stakeholders engaged in the work of improving literacy instruction. **All workbook pages are included next in this guide**.

The overarching goal of these workbook pages is to promote a unified and informed literacy approach, encouraging users to align educational insights, evaluate strengths and weaknesses, confront biases, and prepare for future literacy efforts.

The following tips are ways regional leaders can maximize the benefits of these pages:

- **Coordinate Literacy Efforts Across Districts:** Ensure the sharing of resources and strategies across districts. Use the workbook as a framework for regional literacy initiatives, focusing on equitable literacy opportunities, especially in under-resourced areas.

- **Advocate for Policy and Funding:** Collaborate with state education departments and legislators to support literacy initiatives through policy and funding. Utilize regional data to highlight the impact of programs and the importance of literacy at the state level.

- **Enhance Regional Collaboration and Networking:** Organize meetings, workshops, and conferences to share insights and resources among literacy leaders and stakeholders. Establish a regional literacy network to foster collaboration and spread innovative practices.

- **Leverage Technology to Enhance Literacy Instruction:** Encourage the integration of technology in literacy instruction regionwide. Facilitate access to digital resources, educational apps, and online platforms for personalized student learning. Collaborate with district leaders to use technology effectively and equitably, including training teachers on digital tool integration. Advocate for necessary infrastructure and support, aiming to reduce the digital divide and improve literacy through innovative learning experiences.

NEXT ➡

Regional Leaders WORKBOOK

GOAL 1
Every **student** receives high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

Implementation Considerations

✓ Differing support may be needed across districts within a region.

✓ Regional support may look like guiding the analysis of the local context of student data, reviewing curriculum on a regular cycle, connecting schools to resources, providing professional learning, and so on.

✓ Educators within the region have varied experiences, professional learning, teacher preparation, and beliefs about literacy. Consider the strengths that the variety presents.

✓ Students in most need of literacy support will benefit from prioritizing the commitment to equity.

Next Steps

☐ Utilize a needs assessment with districts to deepen the understanding of the instructional shifts that need to take place.

☐ Analyze regional data to identify who is served by current literacy instruction and what gaps exist.

☐ Engage in review cycles of literacy curriculum and intervention materials that are commonly used across the region.

☐ Offer guidance for districts who need help with selecting and or purchasing literacy materials.

☐ Provide special attention to alternative education students to specifically support their unique literacy needs.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. How will regional leaders identify localized support needed across districts?

2. How can regional leaders build educator capacity when using MTSS to support the implementation of the literacy plan?

3. What existing organizations or resources in the area are engaged in similar work?

4. How can regional leaders meet the diverse needs of all students, including English learners, students with disabilities, and students from marginalized and disenfranchised communities?

5. What obstacles exist that prevent regional leaders from achieving this goal?

GOAL 2

Every **educator** is prepared and continuously supported to deliver high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

Implementation Considerations

✓ Identifying regional champions of literacy and providing the necessary professional learning for implementation of evidence-based literacy practices creates a coalition supportive of literacy and one another.

✓ Regional leaders need to be proactive and strategic when designing and implementing state level support to ensure districts have the appropriate levels of guidance to support them where they are at.

✓ Professional learning opportunities should be encouraged and promoted to all Pre-K through 12th grade teachers.

✓ Regional leaders should identify and monitor literacy outcomes and trends impacting local student outcomes.

Next Steps

☐ Research and apply for funding to support professional learning for administrators and teachers across your region.

☐ Assist districts in developing their own professional learning and embedded on-the-job training using district coaches.

☐ Share messaging plans with regional leaders to help maintain a consistent focus on literacy.

☐ Establish regional literacy coordination committees, conferences, or workshops.

☐ Create a platform for districts to share effective literacy strategies.

☐ Share strategies for analyzing and monitoring literacy data and progress.

☐ Advocate for policy changes that promote evidence-based literacy instruction at the state level.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. How can regional coordination enhance the impact of literacy initiatives?

2. How can regional coordination enhance the impact of literacy initiatives?

3. How will regional leaders sustain ongoing professional learning?

4. How can we ensure the exchange of successful literacy practices among districts?

5. What data should we monitor to assess regional literacy progress?

6. Are there policy barriers at the regional level that need to be addressed to support evidence-based literacy instruction?

GOAL 3

Every **leader** is equipped to create, maintain, and sustain equitable conditions for high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction.

Implementation Considerations

✓ Stakeholders may have varying levels of comprehension when it comes to the state literacy plan. It is essential to ensure that clarity is uniform across all target audiences.

✓ Recognize the vast diversity of the state while acknowledging that each school and community commitment to literacy will vary.

✓ Through data, community, engagement, analysis and strategies, implementation, and accountability and communication must remain at the center of the work ahead.

✓ Regional leaders serve as connectors between districts, schools, and the state education system.

✓ Collaboration among regional leaders fosters a unified approach to literacy improvement.

✓ Supporting district leaders in implementing state literacy goals is a core responsibility.

Next Steps

☐ Organize regional conferences or workshops focused on literacy best practices.

☐ Foster partnerships between districts and community organizations to expand literacy resources.

☐ Advocate for state-level support for regional literacy initiatives.

NOTES

Reflection Questions

1. How will regional leaders communicate and update the districts in your region regarding the Comprehensive Literacy Plan?

2. How will regional leaders identify localized support needed across districts?

3. How can I facilitate collaboration among districts to share effective literacy strategies and resources?

4. What regional professional development opportunities can support district and school leaders in their literacy efforts?

5. How can I advocate for regional initiatives that align with the state's literacy vision?

SECTION 4:
Support and Implementation Considerations

These workbook pages provide guidance in the form of suggestions for reflections and discussion at different levels to ensure that every system is aligned to promote literacy success by streamlining and focusing initiatives on literacy. These pages were designed with local literacy teams in mind, and are perhaps most dynamic when completed with a varied group of stakeholders in preparation to developing or revising a local literacy plan.

Additionally, consider the following suggestions:

- **Establish Clear Objectives and Roles**: Ensure that every participant understands the overarching goals of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan and how it relates to your local context. Assign clear roles and responsibilities to group members based on their expertise, interests, and stakeholder perspectives.

- **Foster Open Communication and Collaboration**: Encourage an environment where all participants feel valued and empowered to share their perspectives. Emphasize the importance of constructive feedback and collaborative problem-solving. The diverse backgrounds of community members, families, and educators can offer a wealth of insights into practical, culturally relevant applications of the literacy plan.

- **Utilize the Workbook as a Guided Tool, Not a Checklist**: Approach the workbook as a framework for discussion and planning rather than a mere checklist to be completed. Engage deeply with each section, encouraging the group to discuss how the principles and strategies of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan can be adapted and implemented in your local context. This involves critical thinking about the unique needs of your community and how the plan can address them.

- **Incorporate Data and Research**: Make informed decisions by incorporating local literacy data, research findings, and best practices into your discussions and planning. This can involve reviewing local literacy rates, school performance metrics, and community feedback. Use this data to identify priorities and tailor the literacy plan to address specific challenges and opportunities within your community.

- **Plan for Implementation and Monitoring**: Develop a clear action plan for implementing the literacy strategies discussed. This plan should include specific steps, timelines, responsible parties, and metrics for evaluating progress. Engaging varied stakeholders in this ongoing process ensures continued relevance and responsiveness to the community's needs.

The effectiveness of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan in your local context depends on how well it is adapted to meet the unique needs of your community. By approaching the workbook with a mindset of collaboration, inclusivity, and evidence-based planning, your group can develop a comprehensive and effective local literacy plan.

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Reflection: What are the **strengths** of the school or district? Consider what school/district/state data suggests and challenges faced by current literacy programs.

Guiding Questions:

1. How can **strengths** be built upon and challenges addressed?

2. What **evidence-based instructional strategies** need to be incorporated?

3. What programs does the school/district have in place to support the needs of various **learners**, including learners who are from varying cultural backgrounds, multilingual learners, high-incidence special needs learners, advanced learners, and learners from the range of ages and grade levels?

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Reflection: What patterns or trends can be observed through **student performance data** (examining a range of years/school level/district/state)? Close attention should be paid to the lowest performing sub-groups of students, as their performance may reflect most clearly on the strength of the school/district's literacy instruction. Disaggregation of assessment data should be completed by, but not limited to, the following categories:

- Grade levels and cohorts, as appropriate.
- Student demographic identifiers: race/ethnicity, low income, homelessness, migrant status.
- Special programming enrollment: Individualized Education Program/504 Plan students, English learner designations, Title 1 service identification, and identification for advanced learner programs.

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Guiding Questions:

1. How can this data inform **literacy improvement** efforts?

2. How do assessment tools align across grade levels to **build** a coherent system?

3. What type of **data** is being collected at each grade level?

4. How can this data **inform** literacy improvement efforts?

5. Does the data **align** with what we know about literacy development?

6. Are benchmark assessments evaluating **key literacy components** for each grade level?

7. Are these assessments identifying students in need or evaluating **student growth** in literacy components?

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Reflection: Who are the key **stakeholders** in the literacy initiative of the school or district?

Guiding Questions:

1. How can the school/district involve these stakeholders in **shaping** the local literacy plan?

2. How can the school/district communicate the process of instructional shifts in **teaching** literacy and what considerations will be made for the building towards buy-in of the local literacy plan?

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Reflection: What is envisioned for literacy experiences in the school/district and how will these lead to improved **student outcomes**?

Guiding Question:

1. How can a clear **vision and mission** guide the local literacy plan?

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Reflection: What specific **literacy goals** are most critical for students in your school/district?

Guiding Question:
1. How will progress be measured toward the **achievement** of these goals?

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Reflection: Who should be included on the literacy **leadership team**?

Guiding Questions:

1. How can **diverse expertise** benefit literacy efforts in your school/district?

2. How will outside expertise/experience be identified/used to augment/support the literacy **leadership team** in its work?

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Reflection: How well does the current curriculum **align** with state standards?

Guiding Questions:

1. What changes or enhancements are needed for **alignment**?

2. How will the alignment provide insight into necessary professional learning tied to **improved outcomes** for students?

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Reflection: Are there evidence-based instructional **strategies** that can be incorporated?

Guiding Question:

1. How can teachers use these strategies to **engage students** in order to build upon student assets and interests?

Reflection: What assessment tools will help track **student growth**?

Guiding Question:

1. How, when, and in what form can assessment **data** guide instructional adjustments?

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Reflection: How can **local resources** (e.g., considerations for time, money, or space) be allocated strategically for maximum impact?

Guiding Question:

1. What **resources** are essential for successful implementation of a local literacy plan?

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Reflection: What **professional learning** opportunities do local educators need in order to deliver high-quality evidence-based literacy instruction? How can these opportunities be built over time?

Guiding Questions:

1. How will ongoing training **support** the local literacy plan?

2. What is the cadence for **training**?

3. How might the school/district differentiate **training** based upon staff need, expertise, or topic?

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Reflection: How can the school/district actively **involve** families and the community in literacy?

Guiding Questions:

1. What strategies will enhance family and community **partnerships** to strengthen the importance of literacy?

2. What **connections** can be made with school and community librarians to support literacy?

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Reflection: How will the school/district ensure transparent and **effective communication** and easy access to providing feedback?

Guiding Question:

1. What channels and **methods** will be most effective to ensure that all who wish to share perspective are able to do so?

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Reflection: How will local/district/state data be utilized to inform **decisions** throughout the implementation of the local literacy plan? What is the cadence in which data will be considered?

Guiding Question:

1. What processes need to be in place to ensure **data-driven decision-making** to guide the implementation of the local literacy plan?

Print me!

Reflection: How often will the effectiveness of the plan be **evaluated**?

Guiding Questions:

1. What **indicators** will be used to measure success?

2. How will these **indicators** be identified?

3. How do the **metrics** tie to the purpose of the local literacy plan?

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Reflection: How will the local plan be **adapted** and refined as needed?

Guiding Question:

1. How can flexibility contribute to **long-term success**?

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Reflection: What **key elements** must be included in the final plan?
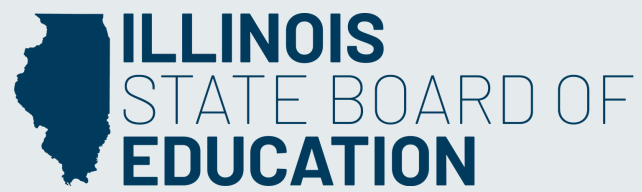
Guiding Question:

1. How can schools/districts ensure the plan is **comprehensive**?

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Reflection: What is a realistic timeline for **executing** the plan?

Guiding Questions:

1. How will you **prioritize** tasks to meet the goals?

2. What smaller timeline **goals** are necessary for executing the plan?

3. How will the school/district continually support individuals who join the district throughout the implementation timeline to ensure they are adequately equipped with the necessary resources, training, and mentorship to seamlessly integrate into the educational environment and contribute to the district's **goals and objectives**?

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